Life Says Photos Dispute Theory of Kennedy Bullets

Life magazine printed pictures of the Kennedy assassination today and said they cast doubt on the conclusion of the Warren Commission that a single bullet killed President John F. Kennedy and wounded Texas Gov. John Connally.

The magazine said the picture and Connally's interpretation of it neither proves nor disproves that Lee Harvey Oswald had a co-conspirator in killing Kennedy, but does show "that reasonable—and disturbing—doubt remains." It called for a new investigation of the assassination, which took place three years ago tomorrow.

The picture, frame 230, is a part of a sequence of motion pictures taken by a Dallas resident, Abraham Zapruder. It shows Kennedy having been struck by a bullet and Connally sitting in front of him with his hand slightly raised holding his hat.

Connally has maintained that he was struck by a separate bullet, one of three the commission said was fired.

The Warren Commission's theory of a single bullet having hit both Kennedy and Connally was propounded to explain a problem of timing in its belief that three shots were fired.

The rifle used by Oswald needed 2.3 seconds between each shot, according to the commission's caculations.

Using the Zapruder film, the commission said that Kennedy "was not hit until at least frame 210 and that he was probably hit by frame 225." Zapruder's 8mm. movie camera ran at 18.3 frames a second, or a little more than one-twentieth of a second—0.55 seconds—for each frame.

The half-second interval between shots that would have allowed Kennedy to have been hit at frame 225 and Connally at frame 234 would have required firing from more than one gun.

Had Kennedy been hit at frame 210, this would still have allowed only 1.3 seconds until frame 234, a second less than the minimum time required to open and close the bolt of Oswald's rifle to fire it.

Even More Convinced

Life said Connally was even more convinced of his testimony before the commission that he and Kennedy were hit by different bullets after viewing blowups of the Zapruder film.

Connally testified that he heard the first shot that hit Kennedy and was turning to look at the President when he felt a second shot hit him. After reviewing the Zapruder film recently, he told Life:

"They talk about the 'one-bullet or two-bullet theory,' but as far as I'm concerned, there is no 'theory.' There is my absolute knowledge . . . that one bullet caused the President's first wound, and that an entirely separate shot struck me. It's a certainty. I'll never change my mind."

Upholds Theory

The leading proponent of the single-bullet theory was Arlen Specter, an assistant counsel of the commission who is district attorney of Philadelphia.

Life quoted Specter as upholding the theory and saying he believed frame 230 showed Connally "wincing. indicating a probability he's been hit," with his wrist apparently coming up from his lap in frame 229 as though it was wounded.

The commission report said that "although it is not necessary to any essential findings of the commission to determine just which shot hit Gov. Connally, there is very persuasive evidence from the experts to indicate that the same bullet which pierced the President's throat also caused Gov. Connally's wounds."

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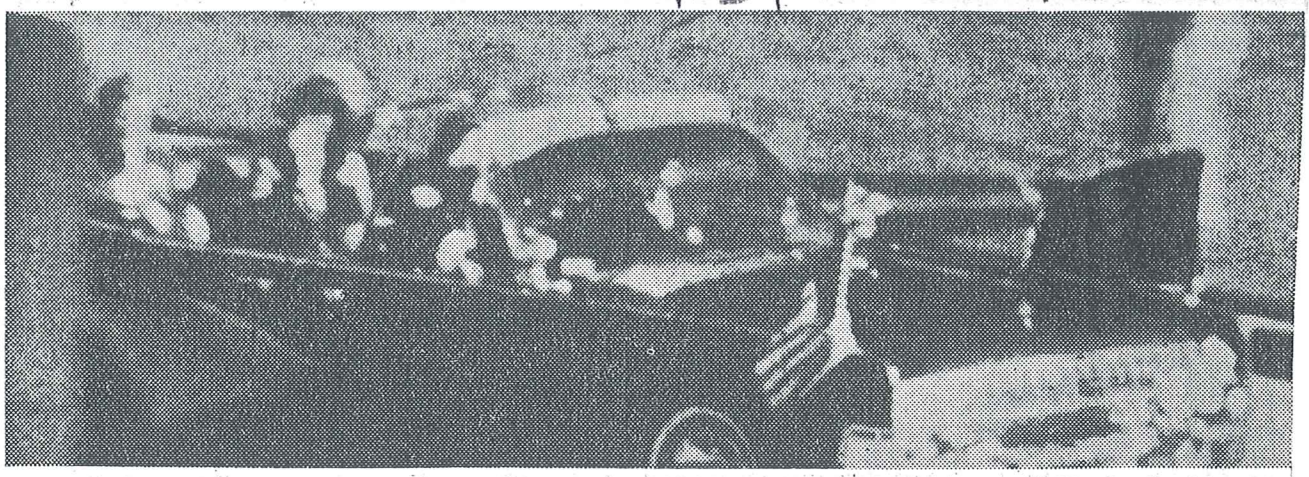
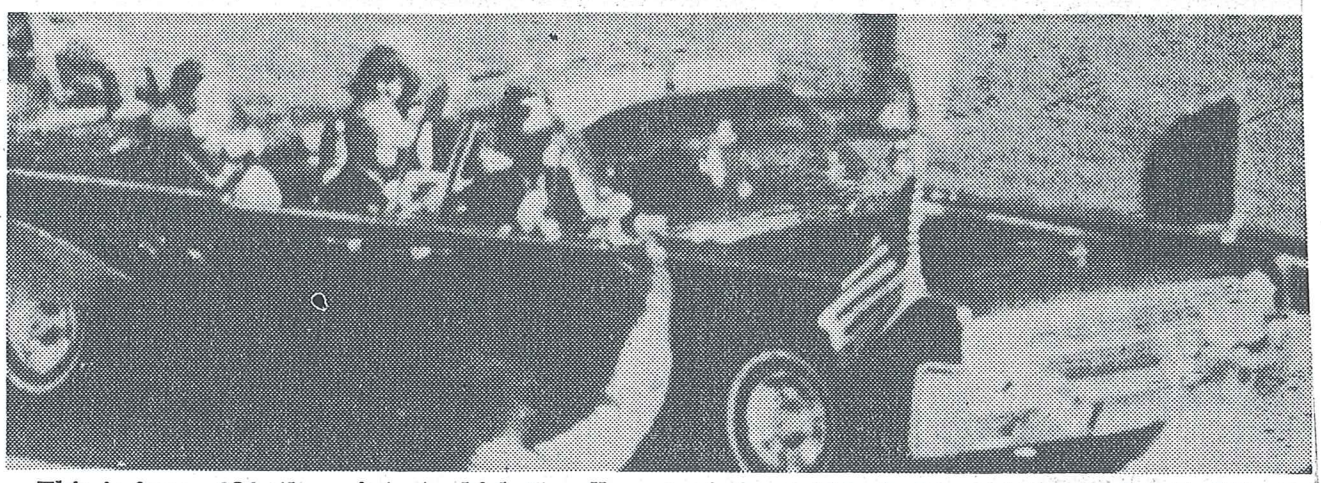
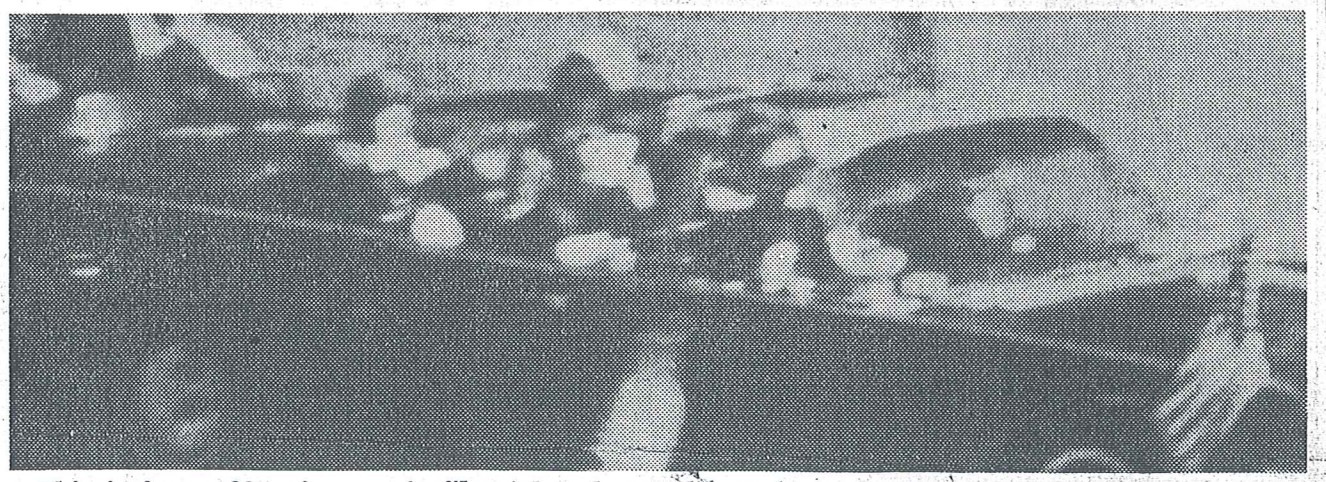


—Photos from Life Magazine—Copyright Time, In

Here is frame 230, taken .27 seconds after frame 225. Life says it shows a calm Connally still gripping the brim of his hat with his right hand, which was supposedly injured a second before. A staff member of the Warren Commission says the picture shows Connally wincing. Connally says he was unharmed at this point.



This is frame 234, the point at which Conally says he was struck. It is at least nine frames and a half second later than the Warren Commission said he had been hit, according to Life. Connally concedes he might have been hit a frame or two earlier, but no more.



This is frame 225 of a movie film taken by Abraham Zapruder of President Kennedy's assassination and now owned by Life Magazine. Life says it shows that Kennedy's face is distorted and his right hand is rising toward his neck. Gov. John Connally, seated in front of Kennedy, appears unperturbed, Life says. The Warren Commission said President Kennedy probably was hit by the time of frame 225.